

DOGS OF WAR BARE THEIR TEETH OVER COLOMBIA

HON. JOHN CONYERS, JR.

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2001

Mr. CONYERS. Mr. Speaker, today I am pleased to offer for the RECORD an op-ed piece written by Ms. Arianna Huffington that appeared in the Los Angeles Times on Tuesday, July 17, 2001. This article regards our country's involvement in Plan Colombia. Before we begin debate on the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill, I think it is important that the Congress and the people of the United States reconsider our current policy toward our southern neighbor and third most populous country in South America.

DOGS OF WAR BARE THEIR TEETH OVER COLOMBIA

For more than a year, critics of our government's drug-war aid package to Colombia (now hovering at \$2 billion) have been warning of the mission creep that threatens to embed us ever deeper in that country's 4-decades-old civil war.

Well, the slippery slope just got greased.

The House of Representatives is about to vote on the \$15.2-billion foreign operations spending bill. Buried amid the appropriations for many worthwhile projects such as the Peace Corps and international HIV/AIDS relief is a legislative land mine. It comes in the form of a couple of innocuous-sounding lines that could lead to a massive escalation of U.S. involvement in Colombia's unwinnable war.

Contained in the section of the bill earmarking \$676 million for "counterdrug activities" in the region are the following eye-glazing provisions: "These funds are in addition to amounts otherwise available for such purposes and are available without regard to section 3204(b)(1)(B) of Public Law 106-246. Provided further, that section 482(b) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 shall not apply to funds appropriated under this heading."

Got that? I didn't think so.

Legislative gobbledygook does not get any goofier, but once the meaningless numbers and letters are decoded, and the statutory dots connected, the ominous significance of those provisions becomes all too clear. If approved, they make possible the unlimited buildup of "mercenaries" and the removal of any constraints on the kinds of weapons they can use.

Under current law, the number of U.S. military personnel that can be deployed in Colombia is limited to 500, and they are prohibited from engaging in combat. But as politicians discovered long ago, there are two parts to every law: the spirit of the law and the letter of the law.

As regard Colombia, our government chose the latter, carrying out a classic end-run around the prohibition by funding a war conducted by mercenaries—hundreds of U.S. citizens working for private military contractors like DynCorp, Airscan and Military Professional Resources Inc.

At the moment, the number of these mercenaries is capped at 300. But the first new provision, if it becomes law, does away with this restriction. The other provision removes language that says "weapons or ammunition" while engaged in narcotics-related activities. It's a deadly cocktail: unlimited private forces armed with unlimited weapons.

Congress has always zealously guarded its rights under the War Powers Act. But unless

its members catch on, they could approve a privatized Gulf of Tonkin resolution without even realizing it's hidden in the bill. And once the dogs of war are unleashed, they're awfully hard to round up again—just ask Bob McNamara.

This ongoing and furtive escalation directly contradicts the government's assurances that, as Assistant Secretary of State Rand Beers put it last week, "Plan Colombia is a plan for peace."

"From the beginning," he wrote in an op-ed, "we have stated that there is no military solution to Colombia's problems." Then why, pray, the need for offensive weaponry and unrestricted number of mercenaries?

To make matters worse, a new investigation by the Center for Public Integrity found that U.S. anti-drug money spent on Latin America is being "funneled through corrupt military paramilitary and intelligence organizations and ends up violating basic human rights."

Those who scoff at the idea that our drug-fighting efforts in Colombia could lead to the U.S. becoming embroiled in a massive counter-insurgency war should take a look at a new study by the Rand Corp. commissioned by the U.S. Air Force. The study calls on the United States to drop the phony "counter-narcotics only" pretense and directly assist the Colombian government in its battle against leftist rebels: "The United States is the only realistic source of military assistance on the scale needed to redress the currently unfavorable balance of power."

There is still the chance that Congress will refuse to go along with this statutory trickery. Reps. John Conyers (D-Mich.) and Janice D. Schakowsky (D-Ill.) are considering an amendment to eliminate the new provisions.

Turning an army of heavily armed mercenaries loose in the middle of a bloody civil war is more than a misguided policy—it's utter insanity. It's imperative that our lawmakers defuse these provisions in the bill before they blow up in our faces, and the cliché of "another Vietnam" becomes a sorry Colombian reality.

REGARDING UC DAVIS AND THE NATIONAL TEXTILE CENTERS

HON. DOUG OSE

OF

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2001

Mr. OSE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in supporting the effort on behalf of the University of California at Davis to be included as a member of the National Textile Center (NTC).

Mr. Speaker, it is silly not to include UC Davis in the NTC. Currently, NTC has no member schools west of the Mississippi River. California is America's second leading producer of cotton as well as being a leading national manufacturer of apparel, grossing over \$13 billion annually. The NTC supports a consortium of research at six universities: Auburn, Clemson, Georgia Tech, North Carolina State, University of Philadelphia, and Dartmouth. To include UC Davis in this prestigious company will go a long way to advancing the safety, quality, and durability of clothing and textile products.

UC Davis is the single largest employer in my district, and the faculty is recognized nationally and internationally for their research activities. The Division of Textiles and Clothing offers the most comprehensive textiles and

clothing undergraduate major in the western United States, and no other western university can challenge the laboratory facilities and equipment. UC Davis utilizes the best in human resources, generates the best in physical product, and trains the best of the next generation. As an example, UC Davis is unique to the textile world in its study of fiber and polymer science. The production and use of fibers and polymers go beyond the forms of fabrics and plastics to high performance membranes, composites, and electronic and communication applications. These common-place, daily use substances are constantly being upgraded and improved by the staff and students at the Division of Textiles and Clothing.

Social Science research at UC Davis addresses sociocultural meanings of textiles and apparel, fashion theory, and production-consumption issues related to gender and ethnicity. Collaborations between the physical and social sciences have resulted in a better understanding of the principles underlying the efficacy and acceptance of protective clothing. These discoveries have protected farm workers, health care providers, firefighters, and others. This valuable research can only enhance the NTC and accelerate the next generation of high quality textile product.

I appreciate the committee's interest in UC Davis and the Division of Textiles and Clothing. The Chairman has been generous in engaging us in this colloquy, and I want to thank him personally for his efforts. I am anxious to work with the committee and my colleagues from California on this issue.

FEDERALLY FINANCED, INTEREST FREE MOTOR VEHICLE ACT, H.R. 2544

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2001

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, our Nation has been taking a wild ride on the energy roller coaster for far too long. The citizens of our great nation must not be forced to suffer the ups and downs of an energy crisis that never seems to get better. While the Bush administration has taken a pro-active stance on energy through the release of its National Energy Policy in May, 2001, there is much more to be done—as a Congress, a Nation, and as citizens. For the past eight years, our Nation was subjected to the last Administration's "wait and see" energy policy that was reactive rather than pro-active.

Mr. Speaker, on June, 2001, I sponsored the Federal Motor-Vehicle Fleet Act, H.R. 2263, which enjoys bi-partisan support. The Act mandates that ten-percent of the vehicle fleet purchased by the Federal Government must be comprised of Hybrid-electric Vehicles (HEV) and other high-efficiency vehicles that are powered by alternative sources of energy, sources other than gasoline and diesel.

Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing my companion bill, the Federally Financed, Interest Free Vehicle Act, which as the title indicates, offers federally financed, interest free loans to public schools, municipalities, and local government to purchase Hybrid-Electric and other environmentally friendly high-efficiency vehicles. This program, to be administered by the Department of Transportation,

provides the opportunity for our public institutions that can not avail themselves of the tax benefits of H.R. 2263, to purchase these environmentally friendly, energy-efficient with repayment terms as long as five years.

Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago I was privileged to view the latest technology in alternative fuels, a school bus that runs on fuel cells, rather than gasoline. Fuels other than gasoline and diesel are the wave of the future, and we must ride these waves of technology, as the surfer at the Banzai Pipeline.

This act will not only lower our overall consumption of gasoline, but will save our public schools and municipalities millions of dollars in the cost of gasoline. These savings can be invested in important school programs and in providing our local governments with the resources to offer more services in our communities. Additionally, these hybrid and high-efficiency vehicles are reported to be more environmentally friendly than our conventional vehicles. The Federal Government must seize this opportunity to conserve our resources and to promote environmentally friendly vehicles, and we must do it today.

H.R. 2544

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. LOANS FOR HIGH-EFFICIENCY VEHICLES.

(a) LOAN PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary of Transportation shall establish a program to offer federally financed, interest-free loans to local educational agencies, public institutions of higher education, municipalities, and local governments for the purchase of hybrid electric vehicles or high-efficiency vehicles.

(b) REPAYMENT TERM.—The time for repayment of a loan under this section may not exceed five years.

(c) SECURITY INTEREST.—The Secretary shall require, as a condition of a loan under this section, that the borrower grant to the United States a security interest in any vehicle purchased with the proceeds of such loan.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) The term “high-efficiency vehicle” means a motor vehicle that uses a fuel other than gasoline or diesel fuel.

(2) The term “hybrid electric vehicle” means a motor vehicle with a fuel-efficient gasoline engine assisted by an electric motor.

(3) The term “motor vehicle” has the meaning given that term in section 30102(a)(6) of title 49, United States Code.

(4) The term “local educational agency” has the meaning given that term in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 6301 et seq.).

(5) The term “public institution of higher education” has the meaning given the term

“institution of higher education” in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)), but does not include private institutions described in that section.

(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2002 through 2007 and such sums as may be necessary for each fiscal year thereafter.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. DENNIS MOORE

OF KANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 18, 2001

Mr. MOORE. Mr. Speaker, because I was en route to attending the wedding of my oldest son, Todd, in Hungary, during the late afternoon of July 12, 2001, I was unavoidably absent for vote number 228, on H. Res. 188, which would have provided for House floor consideration of various campaign finance regulatory overhaul proposals. For this purpose, I was granted a leave of absence by the Speaker, after 4 p.m. on July 12, and for the balance of the week. Had I been present for vote number 228, I would have voted “no.”